Insulin-dependent diabetes is a chronic disease that impairs the body’s ability to use food properly. The pancreas fails to produce insulin and is thus unable to use the glucose in the bloodstream for energy, as it should. These people must take insulin, attempting to keep their level of glucose in the blood as close to normal as possible. Diabetes is a constant (24/7) balancing act, trying to balance food, exercise, and insulin. If the balance is thrown off…not enough food, too much food, not enough insulin, too much insulin, not enough or too much exercise…there is the danger of either of two diabetic emergencies: hypoglycemia-low blood sugar, sometimes called “diabetic shock” or hyperglycemia-high blood sugar.

Symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can appear rapidly. These are some symptoms you may see: Inappropriate responses crankiness drowsiness

Confusion and inattention dizziness perspiration

Lack of coordination headache pale complexion

May seem intoxicated shakiness sudden hunger

Seizures unconsciousness

If possible, the student should test his/her blood sugar immediately. If the student’s blood sugar is below 70, or if unable to test blood sugar, he/she should take a sugary snack immediately, such as 3 large sugar cubes or glucose tablets, ½ to 1 cup fruit juice, 6 ounces regular (not diet) soda, or 7 lifesavers. The student should improve within 10-15 minutes. If you see any of the above symptoms, please call me immediately. If the student is able to walk to my office, send him/her with a companion, to be sure that the student arrives safely to my office.

With hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), symptoms occur more gradually. These are the symptoms of hyperglycemia:

Extreme thirst not hungry dry hot skin

Fruity or wine-like odor on breath drowsiness lethargy

Blood test showing high sugar level heavy, labored breathing

Eventual stupor or unconsciousness

This student should test his/her blood sugar, administer more insulin, and flush glucose from the body with water consumption. Again, please send this student to my office with a companion, or call me to retrieve this student. Please contact me with any concerns.